

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 11099

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ETRN, TH

SUBJECT: U.S. - THAI CIVIL AIR NEGOTIATIONS

REF: A. BANGKOK 10431

B. STATE 128760

C. STATE 135665

1. REFTEL A AND PREVIOUS MESSAGES ON SAME SUBJECT GAVE DAILY PROGRESS AND UNSUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION OF CONSULTATIONS ON U.S. - THAI CIVIL AIR RELATIONS. IN PERSONALLY FOLLOWING THE PROGRESS OF THESE CONSULTATIONS, WHICH ENDED ON NO MORE THAN A RELUCTANT WILLINGNESS BY THE THAI SIDE TO MEET AGAIN AT AN UNSPECIFIED LATER DATE, I WAS PARTICULARLY IMPRESSED BY REFTEL B WHICH SET FORTH THE MARKED DISPARITY IN BENEFITS ACCRUING TO U.S. CARRIERS VERSUS THAI CARRIERS IN MONETARY BENEFITS FROM THE BILATERAL AGREEMENT. REFTEL C ALSO CAUGHT MY ATTENTION IN THAT IT AFFIRMED U.S. CIVIL AIR DELEGATION SHOULD HAVE "WIDE DISCRETION" IN CONDUCT OF CONSULTATIONS.

2. DESPITE THESE TWO MESSAGES THE TALKS ENDED JUST SHORT OF A BREAKDOWN AND A RATHER OPEN THREAT BY THE THAI SIDE TO REVOKE THE CIVIL AIR BILATERAL. THROUGH LOCAL SOURCES AVAILABLE TO ME I HAD ASCERTAINED IN ADVANCE JUST HOW SERIOUS THE THAI GOVERNMENT WAS IN SEEKING TO REDRESS WHAT IT REGARDED AS GROSS INEQUALITY IN THE BENEFITS DERIVED
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BY THE TWO SIGNATORIES TO THE AGREEMENT. IT APPEARED

TO ME THAT THE U.S. SIDE WAS THREATENED WITH MUCH THE GREATER ECONOMIC LOSS HAD THE RTG ANNOUNCED REVOCATION, A STEP IT WAS QUITE CAPABLE OF TAKING.

3. PARTICULARLY DISTRESSING TO ME WAS THE APPARENT EXCLUSION FROM THE INSTRUCTIONS TO THE NEGOTIATING TEAM OF ANY CONSIDERATION OF JUST WHAT MIGHT BE AT STAKE FOR THE U.S. IN THAILAND, EVEN BEYOND THE VERY CONSIDERABLE ECONOMIC BENEFITS TO THE U.S. CARRIERS, SHOULD THE RTG HAVE PRECEDED TO REVOCATION.

4. IN THE INFORMAL PAPER I SENT TO WASHINGTON ADDRESSEES UNDER THE TITLE OF "TESTING TIME FOR U.S./THAI RELATIONS," DATED JUNE 10, 1974, I OUTLINED THE MILITARY/POLITICAL STAKE THE U.S. HAS IN THAILAND AND THE PAUCITY OF MEANS BEING PROVIDED TO ME TO DEFEND THAT STAKE. I WISH TO REPEAT AGAIN THAT THERE IS "A SERIOUSLY WIDENING GAP...BETWEEN WHAT U.S. NATIONAL POLICY WOULD LIKE US TO BE ABLE TO DO IN THAILAND AND THE MEANS THE U.S. GOVERNMENT IS MAKING AVAILABLE TO THE BANGKOK MISSION TO KEEP THE THAIS WITH US."

5. CONSEQUENTLY, I STRONGLY URGE THAT IN MAKING PREPARATIONS FOR THE RESUMPTION OF THE BILATERAL CIVIL AIR TALKS, THE CONCERNED WASHINGTON AGENCIES APPROACH THE PROBLEM WITH THE TOTALITY OF OUR NATIONAL POLICY IN THAILAND CLEARLY IN MIND. WE SHOULD NOT RISK LOSING THE WHOLE OF VERY LARGE MILITARY/POLITICAL INVESTMENT IN THAILAND BECAUSE OF PREOCCUPATION WITH A SMALL PART, IMPORTANT AS THAT PART MAY BE WHEN LOOKED AT IN ISOLATION.
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